

*Orders of Romania:  
A Collection of Articles*

*Part I*

*by Antti Ruokonen*

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## 1. Foreword by the Romanian Orders Chancellery

Mr. Antti Ruokonen, Knight of the Romanian "Cultural Merit Order", finalized the 1st part of a larger publication dedicated to a number of past and present Romanian awards.

Specialist in numismatics and an applied researcher, Mr. Ruokonen - although a Finnish citizen - became a good specialist in the complicated, less-known domain of the Romanian phaleristics. He constantly searched through the sections of the Official web-page of the Orders Chancellery: history of the Romanian awards, present day legislation, images of the awards etc.

He realized several studies, which were initially published in Finnish, in the "Numismaatikko" revue. There are awards presently conferred by H. E. the Romanian President, as well as awards conferred during the period of the Romanian Kingdom. All this studies, which were written with historic, legal and statistic information, were illustrated with the images of the respective awards.

Now translated in English, these studies offer an exhaustive view of the past and present Romanian system of awards. The author noticed the European tradition of this system, as well as its European further development (as a small, but visible part of Romania's integration in the EU). Feeling that the Romanian awards are less-known abroad, Mr. Ruokonen tried - and succeeded - also to offer key information about the symbols which are featured by the Romanian orders and medals, and also about the personalities which were somehow involved (the prince Michael Viteazul, the Kings Carol I and Ferdinand I etc.).

Thus, this 1st part of Mr. Ruokonen's study is a meritorious contribution to the promotion of the Romanian history and traditions, and a permanent invitation to other people - scholars or amateurs - to approach the Romanian civilization, as a part of the European civilization.

Anticipating all his efforts, the Orders Chancellery encouraged the first studies of Mr. Ruokonen, and this is how he was awarded the degree of a Knight of the Romanian "Cultural Merit Order". Seeing all his efforts, as well as his permanent and competent approach to the Romanian Orders Chancellery, I appreciate that this award was rightfully given.

Appreciating once again his efforts, I am now able to call him as more than a Knight of a Romanian order, but a true friend of this country.

*Gheorghe Angelescu*  
State Advisor and Chancellor of Orders

## 2. Author's Foreword

This work contains my first 6 articles which were originally published in Finnish in the Journal of the Numismatic Society of Finland between April 2007 and April 2008. This new edition of the articles, an English translation, is published with the hope of gaining a wider readership. The translated articles also contain various small changes and corrections. Pictures included in the original Finnish articles have been omitted as the two parties to whom this work is primarily addressed, i.e. The Romanian Orders Chancellery and the Secretariat of the Royal House of Romania, already have them at hand. All the articles have been meticulously checked and re-checked to ensure the correctness of the facts. However, since the possibility for human errors cannot be entirely excluded, I will be glad to receive feedback or suggestions that the readers might have.

I wish my readers an enjoyable reading experience.

19.5.2008, Koskenkorva, Finland,

*Antti Ruokonen*

### 3. The Order of the Romanian Crown “Ordinul Coroana României”

#### *A Brief History of Modern Romania*

Romania's heartland consists of the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia, which were under the rule of the Ottoman Empire for a long period. The heavy-handed Ottoman rule often resulted in revolts. National awakening began in Romania in 1848, roughly at the same time as elsewhere in Central Europe. The above-mentioned provinces were united as a principality under Alexander Ioan Cuza in 1859 and, after his subsequent overthrow, gained recognition as an autonomic state under Prince Carol (Charles) of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen in 1866, still under the authority of the Ottoman sultan.

Romania had its chance for complete independence during the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-78. Romania was bound by treaties to the Sultan, but Prince Charles could not overlook the benefits of a possible Russian victory. In consequence Romania signed a treaty of military access with Russia and as Russian troops crossed their border, Romania declared its Independence and a war on the Ottoman Empire in May of 1877. After the war ended with Russia's victory, Romania was formally recognised as an independent state by European powers at the Berlin Peace Conference in 1878.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 1881, Prince Charles was crowned as King of Romania, becoming Charles I. Under his nourishing rule, the country developed into a European nation with an expanding economy and culture. King Charles I died on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 1914 and was succeeded by Crown Prince Ferdinand as King Ferdinand I. Romania joined the First World War on the side of Entente in 27<sup>th</sup> of August 1916 after the Entente had formally recognised Romania's claim to Transylvania (which was still a part of Austro-Hungary). The War went badly for Romania and most of the country was occupied by central powers until 1918. After the fortunes of War turned to favour the Entente, Romania rejoined the fray and was able to stand with the victorious allies when peace treaties were signed with Germany and her allies. Thus, in the treaty of Trianon, Romania received broad swathes of land and became what is known as the “Greater Romania”.

King Ferdinand died on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July 1927 and as his son Charles had left the country with his mistress, the rule of the Country passed on to his son Michael. Due to his young age, a council of three regents was established to rule in his stead. This did not prevent Charles from turning three years to claim the throne by a coup d'état. He would rule Romania as King Charles II for the next ten years.

Romania had a rough time at the beginning of the Second World War. She was forced to cede Bessarabia and northern Buchovina to the Soviet Union after an Ultimatum on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 1940 and then a large part of Transylvania to Hungary with the Vienna Treaty negotiated by the Axis on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August the same year. As the last straw, southern Dobrugea was handed over to Bulgaria in the early days of September. Soon afterwards, the military led by General Antonescu forced King Charles to abdicate and leave the country. Crown Prince Michael was crowned as the new king, Michael I. The real power rested with the general.

Under the dictatorial rule of General and subsequent Marshal Antonescu, Romania became more closely connected to the Axis and so joined the invasion of Russia in the summer of 1941. The war ultimately led to a disaster for Romania, and King Michael led a successful coup d'état against the marshal on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1944, which shortened the war in Europe by months and helped to save countless lives. However the manoeuvre failed to save Romania as Moscow wanted to create a string of friendly communist states along its border. Russian troops stayed in the country even after peace treaties had been signed and helped the local communists to push their agendas. This situation culminated in the abdication and exile of the popular King Michael in the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 1947. Soon afterwards Romania was declared a People's Republic. The communist rule became harsher over time, especially after Ceaușescu was made President in 1965. He was finally overthrown and executed in the aftermath of the popular uprising of 1989. Old Communists continued to hold power in the democratic republic of post-1989 until the centrist Emil Constantinescu was elected president in 1996. King Michael first returned to Romania in 1992; over a million people came to welcome him in Bucharest, and today King Michael has an official status as a former head of state. The Romania of today is a republic with a royal house and is a member of both the EU and NATO.

### *Founding of the Order of the Romanian Crown*

The Order of the Romanian Crown (Ordinul Coroana României) was founded by King Charles I on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 1881. This act was formalised on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1881, a day of great importance in Romanian history for many reasons: Charles I first entered Bucharest as a ruler on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1866, Romania declared its independence on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1877 and finally Charles I was crowned as King on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1881.

The Order was conferred to both Romanians and foreign citizens for merit during times of peace and war. It consists of the following classes:

Grand Cross – Mare Cruce  
Grand Officer – Mare Ofițer  
Commander – Comandor  
Officer – Ofițer  
Knight – Cavaler

The sign of the Order consists of a red enamelled Malta cross with white edges. The first type (conferred 1881-1932) has a silver or golden monogram of Charles I between the arms of the cross, depending on the class. The Centre holds a crown on a red background, circled by the legend “\*PRIN NOI INSINE \* 14 MARTIE 1881” (through us, 14.3.1881). The reverse Centre has the date “10. MAIU” (10<sup>TH</sup> OF May) circled by a white line with the dates “1866 \* 1877 \* 1881 \*”.

In the second type (conferred 1932-1947), the positions of the crowns and monograms are reversed. The Star of the Grand Cross has a cross of the Order in its Centre, whereas the Grand Officer's star only has the Centre of a Cross of the Order.

The conferring of different classes within the Military followed a strict protocol as is the case with other such Orders. Each grade of the Order was recommended by the officer's superior (within his chain of command) e.g. a regimental commander or even the commanding General of the Army, depending on the awardee's rank and position. Traditionally the final decision rested with the grand master of the order, King of Romania, but especially when lower classes were conferred, decisions were made by the Orders Chancellery.

The Order underwent many changes during its existence:

- 21.12.1916 The Order could be conferred with swords for merit during times of war and the swords could also be attached to the ribbon of the cross, but only in lower classes.
- 9.5.1932 The design of the Order and that of its ribbons was altered.
- 14.2.1937 All classes could be awarded with swords.
- 22.2.1938 Creation of a special military division, all of its classes to be awarded with a crown above the cross.
- 14.8.1938 New regulation published concerning the conferring of the military division during times of peace.
- 19.12.1938 Crosses of the military division could now be conferred with a special wartime ribbon. Creation of a version for women.
- 30.6.1941 All classes of the order could be awarded with a special ribbon for bravery.
- 27.4.1942 In conjunction with a general mobilisation, the period of waiting before a person could receive a higher class, was given up. Crosses of the order given in these circumstances were marked with the letter "M" in the award rolls.

The numbers awarded are not known, but the Order was often conferred to military officers allied with Romania, including Finns and Germans. There were no limits as to how many knights Crosses were conferred to or how many crosses were conferred to foreigners or during times of war. The only available numbers known are the maximum numbers of Romanian awardees during peace time.

	1881	1932	1938	
Class	Civilian/Military	C / M	C	M
Grand cross	25	150	200	50
Grand officer	80	300	400	100
Commander	150	500	1000	250
Officer	300	1500	2000	500

#### *Technical details*

- Grand Cross Worn in a large ribbon (sash) over the right shoulder. By Clergymen on a broad ribbon around the neck.  
 Cross: 1881-1932, 70 mm.  
 1932-1947, 55 mm.  
 Breast star: 1881-1932, approx. 89 mm.  
 1932-1947, 75 mm.  
 The cross is silver gilt and the stars body silver.
- Grand Officer Worn on a broad ribbon around the neck, with the breast star on the left side of the chest.  
 Same Cross as the Commander.  
 Brest Star 1881-1932, 80-82 mm.  
 1932-1944, 65-66 mm.
- Commander Worn on a broad ribbon around the neck.  
 Cross: 1881-1932, 60 mm.  
 1932-1944, 46 mm.  
 Height with Crown 68 mm.

Officer	Worn on a ribbon, with a rosette on the left breast.
Cross:	1881-1932, around 40 mm 1932-1947, 37 mm. Height with Crown 56 mm. Silver gilt of bronze.

In rare cases, the Order was also conferred with diamonds.

I. Class      Worn like a Breast Star.  
Size:                  33 mm  
Rays of the Star:    35-33.5 mm.  
Centre:               13 mm.  
The base metal is Silver-gilt.

1877-1932	Watered light blue with two steel coloured stripes 1/3 of their breadth away from the edges.
Grand Cross	100 mm, stripes 20 mm.
Grand Officer and Commander	40 mm, stripes 8 mm.
Officer and Knight	35 mm, stripes 6 mm.

War ribbon	As above, but with yellow edges 7 mm with the Grand Cross to the 3 mm with other classes.
Bravery ribbon	Same proportions, but with a red base colour and blue stripes.

Paul Telge, Berlin  
Court-Jeweler Heinrich Weiss, Bukarest  
Resch and Son, Bucharest  
(Josef Resch and sons)  
C.F. Zimmermann, Pforzheim  
Monetaria Nationala, Bucharest.



## 4. The Order of the Star of Romania ”Ordinul Steaua României”

### *During the Kingdom*

The order was founded without a formal decree in the year 1864 in five classes, while Romania was still an autonomic state within the Ottoman Empire. This makes it the first Order of United Romania. During the Era of the Kingdom, it was above the previously described Crown Order in the national hierarchy of Orders. The Order was designed by Carol Pop de Szathmari (1812-1887), who worked with the Parisian jeweller Kretly. Between 1864 and 1877, it existed as the so-called Order of Unification, a symbol of the recent unification between Wallachia and Moldavia. However, this type is not discussed in this article since it predates the scope of the study<sup>i</sup>.

The Order underwent many changes during its long existence:

- 10.5.1877 The Order is formally founded by Prince Carol I (Charles I) on the day of the Romanian Declaration of Independence in five classes, divided into military and civil divisions. This was the first act of the Sovereign state of Romania.
- 17.4.1880 Established maximum conferring numbers are altered.
- 10.8.1885 All classes can be awarded with swords through the centre of the cross for merit during times of war.
- 21.12.1916 Commander, officer and knight classes could now be conferred with a special bravery ribbon.
- 9.5.1932 Design of the Order is altered.
- 12.2.1937 A new 1<sup>st</sup> class is created between the classes of Grand Cross and Grand Officer.
- 26.11.1937 The ribbon for bravery is disbanded.
- 19.12.1938 Crosses of the Order could be conferred with a wartime ribbon.
- 30.6.1941 The ribbon for bravery can again be conferred.

The following maximum numbers of conferring the Order to Romanians are known (during peacetime):

	1932		1938	
Class	Civil	Military	Civil	Military
Grand Cross	35	10	45	15
1st Class	--	--	75	25
Grand Officer	75	25	100	40
Commander	200	75	300	125
Officer	500	150	750	250
Knight	1000	350	1500	500

Awards to foreigners and to Romanians during wartime were not limited. The Order could also be conferred posthumously. During the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, awards were made to Officers of armies allied with Romania such as Russia, Great Britain and Serbia. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, the same

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<sup>i</sup> There was also a Star Order during the Communist Era which is beyond the scope of this study.

applied to Germans, Italians and Finns. The Finnish Defence minister Rudolf Walden was awarded with the Grand Cross of the Order during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. Although wide-scale conferring was discontinued after the armistice with Russia in 1944, the Order was sparingly awarded until 1947. In the desperate military situation of 1944, several ships of the Romanian Navy were conferred this Order.

### *Signs of the Order*

#### 1<sup>st</sup> type

The Sign of the Order is a blue enamelled cross, its centre surrounded by the rays of a star between the arms of the Cross. The round centre holds an Eagle fixed on a red background with an Orthodox cross in its beak. The Eagle is surrounded by a blue line with the legend “In Fide Salus \* \* \*” (Salvation in loyalty) and the line in turn is surrounded by a green laurel wreath. The reverse centre holds the crowned monogram of King Charles I on a red background. A crown which holds the attachment ring of the ribbon is attached to the top arm of the Cross.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> type

The sign of the Order was changed (9.5.1932), In the 2<sup>nd</sup> type, we find eagles between the arms of the cross, the monogram of Charles I in the obverse centre and the year 1877 in the reverse centre.

### *Classes of the Order*

**Grand Cross** Worn on a large ribbon (sash) over the right shoulder. By Clergymen on a broad ribbon around the neck.

Cross: 1877-1932, 70-73.5 mm.

1932-1947, 60 mm.

Breast star: 1877-1932, 93-96 mm.

1932-1947, 75 mm.

The cross is silver gilt, the stars body silver.

**1<sup>st</sup> Class** Worn on a large ribbon (sash) over the right shoulder. By Clergymen on a broad ribbon around the neck.

Cross: 1937-1947, 60-61 mm.

Breast Star: 1937-1947, 82-83.5 mm.

**Grand Officer** Worn on a broad ribbon around the neck, the breast star on the left side of the chest.

Same Cross as the Commander.

Breast Star: 1877-1932, 90 mm.

1932-1944, 66 mm.

**Commander** Worn on a broad neck ribbon.

Cross: 1877-1932, 61-64.5 mm.

1932-1947, 50-60 mm.

**Officer** Worn from a ribbon with a rosette on the left breast.

Cross: 1877-1932, 40 mm.

1932-1947, 40-42 mm.

Silver gilt or bronze.

**Knight** Worn from a ribbon on the left breast.

Same measurements as for the Officer's Cross.

The Cross is silver or silvered.

The order was conferred in the civil division, *Insemnele de pace* or in the military division; *Insemnele militare de pace* and *Insemnele militare de razboi*, during peace or wartime, the only

difference being the ribbon. The military division was awarded with swords through the centre for merit during times of war and with swords between the Crown and the cross during times of peace. If a member of the military had seen meritorious service during both times of peace and war, he could wear a cross with double swords (i.e both through the centre and the between the crown and the top arm). This was rare and the author has only seen one such Cross. Crosses of the order were originally made of silver and silver-gilt, but as the war progressed and materials became scarce, manufacturers began to use gilt bronze, and for the lower grades, other silvered metals.

## Ribbons

### 1<sup>st</sup> type (1877-1932)

Watered red with two blue stripes.

(Class)	Breadth	Inner stripe	Outer strip
Grand Cross	100 mm	8 mm	5 mm
	104 mm	10 mm	5 mm
Grand Officer/ Commander	45-48 mm	5.5 mm	3.5 mm
Officer/ Knight	35-40 mm	3 mm	3 mm

### 2<sup>nd</sup> type (1932-1947)

Watered red with silver stripes.

(Class)	Breadth	Inner stripe	Red edge
Grand Cross	100 mm	11 mm	6,5 mm
1 <sup>st</sup> Class	100.5 mm	18 mm centre stripe	
Grand Officer/ Commander	44.5 mm	5.5 mm	2 mm
Officer	40 mm	4 mm	1 mm
Knight	37 mm	4 mm	1 mm

War ribbon: As the 2<sup>nd</sup> type above, but with golden edges, 3-7mm depending on the class.

Bravery ribbon: Same proportions, but with a red base colour and blue stripes.

## Known manufacturers:

### 1<sup>st</sup> type

Kretly, Paris  
Resch and Son, Bucharest  
C.F. Zimmermann, Pforzheim

### 2<sup>nd</sup> type

Court-Jeweler Heinrich Weiss, Bukarest  
Resch and Son, Bucharest  
Monetaria Nationala, Bucharest.

## *The Resurrection*

The Star Order began its new life when the Romanian system of decorations was reformed in the 1990s after the fall of Communism. The Order was formally established as the National Order of the Star of Romania on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 1998. It became the nation's highest Order in peace-time. The design has remained much the same as that of the 2<sup>nd</sup> type during the kingdom, but the eagles have a slightly altered appearance and the monogram of Charles I has been replaced by the national Arms of Romania. The crown above the cross has also been replaced with an oval wreath made up of laurel and oak leaves. In addition to these changes, the 1<sup>st</sup> class was disbanded and a Collar was added to the order as its highest class. The Order is manufactured by the state mint, Monetaria

Statului. A sign of the status of the Order is that knights in the order attain the rank and honours of officers in the Romanian Army<sup>ii</sup> as follows:

Collar – General of the Army / Air Chief Marshal / Admiral  
Grand Cross –Army Corps General / Air Commodore General / Vice-Admiral  
Grand Officer – Division General / Air Division General / Vice-Admiral  
Commander –Brigadier General / General of the Air Force / Rear-Admiral  
Officer – Colonel  
Knight – Captain

The awarding constraints for Romanian citizens during peacetime are as follows:

Class	Civil	Military
Collar	-	-
Grand Cross	65	15
Grand Officer	130	30
Commander	325	75
Officer	850	150
Knight	1700	300

The maximum numbers awarded to Romanian citizens during peace time is 3650.  
The Order has been conferred in the following figures (up to December 2007)

Class	Romanian	Foreign	Total
Collar	2 <sup>iii</sup>	53	54
Grand Cross	15	75	90
Grand Officer	28	88	116
Commander	63	92	155
Officer	145	65	210
Knight	436	35	471

From 1998, the Order has been conferred 1096 times, 408 times to foreigners. Two well-known Finnish knights of the Order are the former president Martti Ahtisaari (1998) and the current president Tarja Halonen (2006).

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<sup>ii</sup> This also applies to other National Orders, but with lower ranks.

<sup>iii</sup> As Grand Master of all Romanian Orders, the president of Romania is also a holder of the Collar.

## 5. The Order of Michael the Brave “Ordinul Mihai Viteazul”

The Order was founded by King Ferdinand I with the royal Decree no. 2968 on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 1916. The Order with its three classes was the highest Order for military merit in the Kingdom of Romania and was awarded to officers for leadership and conspicuous gallantry in the field of battle, exclusively during times of war. Due to the relatively small conferring numbers, its status remained high through both World Wars. The right to wear a special cloak of the Order (with a sheepskin cap in civilian life) established in 1936 served to signify the Order's status among the Romanian hierarchy of Orders and accorded the knights further esteem. The Mannerheim Cross is its closest Finnish equivalent. Swords were first added to the order on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 1938, but were later discarded for an unknown reason on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 1939. Swords reappeared later in the third type of the Order, which will be reviewed later on. First however, let us take a closer look at the man who gave his name to this Order.

Michael the Brave (1558-1601) ruled as Prince in Wallachia (1593-1601), Transylvania (1599-1600) and in Moldavia (1600) which meant that he was the first to rule over a united Romania, he is considered one of Romania's greatest national heroes. Sultan Murad III made Michael Prince of Wallachia in 1593 as a vassal of the Ottoman Empire. In hindsight this was a major error, since from 1594 onwards Michael was almost constantly at war with his Ottoman overlord until Michael's death.

Michael earned his name at the battle of Călugăreni on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August 1595. A superior Ottoman Army had captured his artillery and routed most of his infantry when Michael turned the tide of the battle by personally leading the Wallachian cavalry in an all-out counterattack. The entire Ottoman army was soon stricken by panic and had to retreat from the battlefield in great disarray. Despite this and other successful battles, strained relations with neighbouring countries ensured that Michael could not rule over Romania for long. He ultimately died a victim of a political assassination. The Polish king Sigmund III Wasa and the Hungarian nobles did not care for an unpredictable player upsetting the area's fragile balance of power. Up against the combined pressure from all sides, Michael was forced to retreat to the Romanian hinterland, losing his lands. He was assassinated on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 1601 in his army camp as he was planning a counter-offensive.

For however short a time, Michael the Brave united Romania under a single ruler and thus became a focal point for nationalists to rally around when Romania's national awakening began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Signs of the Order*

The Cross of the Order is a blue enamelled Lily cross with golden edges. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> classes have a crown attached to the top arm.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Class

Pinback cross worn on the left side of the chest. Gilded bronze or silver and blue enamel. Known diameters: 60,3-60,5mm and 61mm.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Class

Worn on a wide ribbon around the neck. Gilded bronze or silver and blue enamel. Height with crown 83-87mm, otherwise diameter the same as above.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Class

Worn on a small ribbon on the left side of the chest. Gilded bronze or silver and blue enamel. Diameter 39-41mm, height with crown 57-59mm.

## *Variations*

### 1<sup>st</sup> type

Awarded during the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. Obverse centre has the monogram of King Ferdinand I (double "F") and reverse holds the year of its founding "1916".

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Type

Awarded between the 8<sup>th</sup> of October 1941 and 1944. The obverse holds the monogram of King Michael I and the year "1941" on the lower arm. The 1<sup>st</sup> Class holds symbols of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> types on its two vertical arms; 1<sup>st</sup> type upwards and the 2<sup>nd</sup> type downwards. The reverse centre has the monogram of King Ferdinand I; the lower arm has the year "1916" in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Classes.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Type

Awarded between the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 1944 and 1947. Design unchanged with the exception of the addition of swords through the centre of the Cross (in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes, the length of the swords is 57mm and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> class 38mm) and the reverse only holding the year "1944". The addition of the swords was made to distinguish between crosses awarded to Axis allies and those given to Western allies and Russians after the armistice signed with Russia on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 1944 when Romania was at war with Germany.

## *Ribbons*

2<sup>nd</sup> Class: 37mm, watered lilac with 3mm golden side stripes approximately 2mm away from the edges.

3<sup>rd</sup> Class: 30mm, otherwise identical with the above described ribbon.

Awards made during the 1<sup>st</sup> World War were as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> Class 16, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class 12, 3<sup>rd</sup> Class 336 of which 43 were conferred to military units.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War:

1<sup>st</sup> Class 15, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class 76, of which 13 were conferred to military units and 3<sup>rd</sup> Class 1628 of which 118 were conferred to military units.

In addition to Romanians, the Order was also awarded to officers in allied armies, such the Russian general Schterbatschef, the British Field Marshall Lord Haig and the Serbian Crown Prince Alexander. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, German recipients were Reich's Marshal Göring (all three classes) and Field Marshals' Von Rundstedt (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> classes), Von Manstein (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> classes) and Von Brauchitsch (all three classes). The only Finnish recipient was the Marshal of Finland and later president Mannerheim, who received all three classes on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 1941.

Known manufacturers:

Rudolf Souval, Wien  
C.F. Zimmermann, Pforzheim  
Fa. Karnet, Prag

### *Rebirth*

The Order was re-established with numerous other Romanian Orders after the fall of communism as the premiere Order for military merit with law nr. 327 in 2003 (foundations laid in the law 29/2000). Unlike its royal predecessor, the Order can now be awarded during peace time as Romanian soldiers participate in UN and NATO operations on a global scale. As the awarding criteria have remained on a high level, the Order is still very highly valued and has so far not been awarded to anyone. The awarding is recommended by the Chancellor of Orders with the Minister of Defence, the final decision resting with the president of Romania (as the Grand Master of Orders). Knights of the Order still retain the right to wear the Cloak of the Order and the sheepskin cap (established in 1936), including old knights who are veterans of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. Knights gather yearly to celebrate the day of Order, the day of Archangels Michael and Gabriel on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October. The festivities are organised by the president of Romania and the guest of honour is King Michael I, as the only living knight who holds all three classes.

### *Signs of the Order*

The Cross of the Order still consists of a blue enamelled Lily cross with golden (silver-gilt) edges. The obverse centre now holds the national Arms of Romania. As with the Star Order, the crown above the cross has been replaced with a green enamelled oval wreath consisting of laurel and oak leaves.

Reverse holds the years “1916” and “2000” (the framework for the reformed Order structure was defined in law 29/2000). The 1<sup>st</sup> class Star is also a new creation. It consists of four groups of diamond-shaped rays, of which there are 12 in each group. A 3<sup>rd</sup>-Class-sized cross sits on its obverse.

#### *1<sup>st</sup> Class*

Worn on a wide ribbon around the neck, Star worn on the left side of the chest. Diameter of the cross: 70mm, the wreath is 20mm high and 29mm wide. The Star is 75mm high and 70mm wide.

#### *2<sup>nd</sup> Class*

Worn on a wide ribbon around the neck. Same as the cross above.

#### *3<sup>rd</sup> Class*

Worn on a small ribbon on the left side of the chest. Diameter 44mm, with the wreath being 15mm high and 20mm wide.

#### *Ribbons*

1<sup>st</sup> Class: 45mm, Lilac red with 5mm golden side stripes 1mm away from the edges.

2<sup>nd</sup> Class: Same as above.

3<sup>rd</sup> Class: 40mm, Lilac red with 4mm golden side stripes 1mm away from the edges.

To the author’s knowledge, no signs of the Order have been made yet, but the future manufacturer will almost certainly be Monetaria Statului.

## 6. The Cultural Merit Order ”Ordinul Meritul Cultural”

The Order was founded in 6 Classes by King Carol II (Charles II) by the Royal decrees 2680 and 2684 on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 1931 to reward meritorious acts in the sphere of Culture. In its first form the Order was conferred to both Romanians and foreign citizens from 1931 until 1944. There was also a Cultural Merit Order during the Communist Era which is not discussed here as it is beyond the scope of this study.

### *Signs of the Order during the Kingdom*

The Sign of the Order is a purple enamelled cross with the portrait of the reigning Monarch in its centre; from 1931 to 1940 King Charles II (1<sup>st</sup> type) and from 1940 to 1944 King Michael I (2<sup>nd</sup> type). The Obverse centre holds the motto of the Order “PRIN CULTURA LA LIBERTATE” (through Culture toward liberty). The two lowest classes (medals) were awarded for general cultural merit. Their obverse holds a portrait of the reigning Monarch (as above) and the reverse a laurel leaf on the left side with the motto of the Order on the right side.

### *Classes (there are no differences between types apart from the portrait of the Monarch)*

Commander	Worn on a broad ribbon around the neck. Silver-gilt and dark purple enamel. Diameter 50.5 mm, height with crown 75 mm.
Officer	Worn from a ribbon with a rosette on the left breast. Silver-gilt and dark purple enamel. Diameter approximately 40 mm, height with crown 59 mm.
Knight 1 <sup>st</sup> Class	Worn from a ribbon on the left breast. Silver and dark purple enamel. Otherwise as above.
Knight 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	Worn as above. Silver and dark purple enamel, but without a crown.
Medal 1 <sup>st</sup> Class	Worn as above. Silver-gilt, diameter 30 mm.
Medal 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	Worn as above. Silvered metal, diameter 30 mm.

The Order was divided into categories based on the different areas of Culture by distinct ribbons.

Category	Ribbon (from Officer to medals 34-35mm watered)
A) Scientific achievements	White with green 4mm side stripes.
B) General cultural achievements	White with a green 4mm centre stripe and 2mm blue edges
C) For merit in education	White with a red 4mm centre stripe and 4mm red edges
D) For merit in the National Guard (added 26.5.1937)	White with blue 4mm edges.
E) For merit in the Scout movement, sports and in physical exercises (26.5.1937 onwards for sports and physical exercises)	Blue with black 4mm edges.
F) Social Welfare	Purple with green 4mm edges.
G) Literature	White with purple 4mm edges.



H) Music and theatre  
I) Religion

White with orange 4mm edges.  
Red, light blue and red with equal sized stripes.

With its wide range, this Order replaced the Bene-Merenti-Medal and the merit medals for Education and the Church. After the disbanding of the National Guard in 1941, there were no more awards in category. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 1937, categories A through F were placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and categories H, I and G (6.10.1937) under the Ministry of Arts and Culture.

The following limitations are known for awarding the Order between 1931 and 1944:

Class Category	Commander Rom./Foreign	Officer Rom./For.	Knight 1 <sup>st</sup> Cl. Rom./For.
A) Scientific achievements	- / -	60 / 150	200 / 250
B) General cultural Achievements	20 / 50	50 / 50	150 / 150
C) For merit in education	15 / 15	100 / 150	300 / 400
D) For merit in the National Guard (added 26.5.1937)	30 / 50	- / -	- / -
E) For merit in the Scout movement, sports and in physical exercises (26.5.1937 onwards for sports and physical exercises)	20 / 20	60 / 60	200 / 200
F) Social Welfare	20 / 20	60 / 60	200 / 200
G) Literature	20 / 50	60 / 150	200 / 250
H) Music and theatre	10 / 30	30 / 100	120 / 150
I) Religion	30 / 50	100 / 150	300 / 400

To the authors knowledge, this Order was not conferred to any Finns during the Era of the Kingdom.

### *The Order today*

The basis for the new form of the Order was established by the law 29/2000, and the regulations were completed in 2003 within the law 8/2003, and the first awards were made in the same year. The Form of the Order has remained largely unchanged, but the long hiatus has brought some alterations. Two classes of Knights have been merged, the grade of Grand Officer has been established as the highest class and a third class has been added to the medals

### *Signs of the Order*

The sign of the Order is now a blue enamelled cross, 0.925 silver (Knight) or silver-gilt (upper classes) with grilles throughout the enamel. The portrait of the monarch has been replaced by the National arms of Romania in the obverse centre. The reverse centre holds the legend “MERITUL CULTURAL” (Cultural Merit). The motto of the Order now circles the centre, as do along the historically significant years “1931 \* 1961 \* 2000 \*”. 1931, when the Order was founded, 1961 when the right to confer Orders was transferred from the national assembly to the Council of State and 2000 when the Order was revived. The Knight’s and Officer’s crosses have a diameter of 40 mm; the Commander’s cross that of 50 mm. The crown above the cross has been replaced with a

semi-circular laurel wreath. The Grand Officer's Star has a diameter of 75 mm; it has a cross of the Order in its centre which is surrounded by rays shaped like rough diamonds in between the arms of the cross.

The same changes apply to the medals. The National Arms of the State have replaced the portrait of the monarch in the obverse, the reverse now holds a proportionally smaller laurel leaf, with the legend "MERITUL CULTURAL" (Cultural Merit) above it. The 1<sup>st</sup> class medal is gold plated, the 2<sup>nd</sup> class silver plated and the 3<sup>rd</sup> class copper plated. The medals have a diameter of 30 mm. All signs of the Order are made by the national mint, Monetaria Statului.

### *Categories and awarding*

The number of categories has remained the same, but the contents of many of the categories have changed.

Category	Ribbon (Knight-Officer 40 mm, commander 45 mm with 7 mm stripes)
A) Literature	White with purple 6 mm side stripes, 2 mm from the edges.
B) Music	White with orange 6 mm side stripes, 2 mm from the edges.
C) Fine Arts	White with red 6 mm side stripes, 2 mm from the edges.
D) Performance Arts	White with blue 6 mm side stripes, 2 mm from the edges.
E) National Cultural Heritage	White with yellow 6 mm side stripes, 2 mm from the edges.
F) Promotion of Culture	White with a green centre stripe and blue side stripes 2 mm from the edges, all 5 mm wide.
G) Religion	White with a blue centre stripe with red edges, all 5 mm wide.
H) Scientific Research	White with green 6 mm side stripes, 2 mm from the edges.
I) Architecture	White with a black centre stripe and yellow side stripes 2 mm from the edges, all 5 mm wide.

Women carry classes of the Order as men do, since bow-shaped ribbons were made illegal in all Romanian Orders and Decorations with the Law nr. 233 of the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2007.

The maximum amount of Knights is (capped at) 8100, of which 15% could have been awarded during the first year. The limitations within categories are as follows:

Category	Grand Off.	Commander	Officer	Knight	Total
A) Literature	50	125	225	450	850
B) Music	40	110	200	350	700
C) Fine Arts	50	150	300	500	1000
D) Performance Arts	50	150	300	500	1000
E) National Cultural Heritage	50	150	300	500	1000
F) Promotion of Culture	50	170	350	580	1150

G) Religion	50	150	300	500	1000
H) Scientific Research	50	100	250	400	800
I) Architecture	40	85	175	300	600

The numbers of foreign Knights are not limited.

The Order has been conferred as follows (up to December 2007):

Category	Romanian	Foreign	Total
A) Literature	141	15	156
B) Music	89	27	116
C) Fine Arts	81	7	88
D) Performance Arts	189	18	207
E) National Cultural Heritage	80	4	84
F) Promotion of Culture	120	62	182
G) Religion	84	2	86
H) Scientific Research	62	13	75
I) Architecture	16	1	17

There are 1011 Knights in the Order as of December 2007. In addition to people, institutions that have promoted Romanian Culture on an international scale can also be conferred with the Order. Since its re-establishment, the Order has been conferred on three Finns: Conductor Leif Segerstam in category B in 2003 (commander), Esa Ruuttunen of the Finnish National Opera in category D in 2004 (officer) and to the author, Antti Ruokonen, in category F in 2007 (knight).

Unlike in the first form, medals have different ribbons from the knight's Crosses:

Category	Ribbon (35 mm, 1 mm centre- and 4 mm side stripes, for women 100 mm bow)
A) Literature	White with purple stripes.
B) Music	White with orange stripes.
C) Fine Arts	White with red stripes.
D) Performance Arts	White with blue stripes.
E) National Cultural Heritage	White with yellow stripes.
F) Promotion of Culture	White with two green centre stripes and blue side stripes.
G) Religion	White with two red and one blue stripes with a white stripe across.
H) Scientific Research	White with green stripes.
I) Architecture	White with two black centre stripes and yellow side stripes.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> classes of medals can be conferred without limitations. The maximum number of conferring the 1<sup>st</sup> Class is capped at 7400. The categories match those of the Knight Class.

Limits and awardings are as follows:

Category	Limits 1 <sup>st</sup> Class	Conferred 1 <sup>st</sup> Class	2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	3 <sup>rd</sup> Class	Total
A) Literature	1000	0	0	43	43
B) Music	1000	9	8	3	20
C) Fine Arts	1000	26	13	12	51
D) Performance Arts	1000	62	61	54	177
E) National Cultural Heritage	1000	61	14	7	82
F) Promotion of Culture	600	36	38	53	127
G) Religion	600	0	0	7	7
H) Scientific Research	600	8	14	6	28
I) Architecture	600	3	4	0	7

542 medals have been awarded since 2003, all of them to Romanian nationals.

The awarding of the Order or its medal is recommended to the president by the Minister of the field, in this case the Minister of Culture. The recommendation must be supported by the Orders Chancellery. The president himself has the right to confer 1% of all awards independently, with the exception of the Grand Officer, which must be recommended by the minister of the field. The Knights of the Order gather on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July (date of original institution) to elect the Council of Honour for the Order (every 5 years).

## 7. The Faithful Service Order “Ordinul Serviciul Credincios”

This Order is special because it was not created to fill a void in the hierarchy of Orders; its founding served to consolidate an existing array of decorations. The Faithful Service Medal was founded by King Carol I (Charles I) in on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1878 as was the Faithful Service Cross on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October 1906. These two were supplemented by the Faithful Service Order on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 1932 by King Charles II. To proceed in a chronological order, I first discuss the Faithful Service Medal and Cross, then the Order and finally their modern counterparts.

### *Faithful Service Medal – Medalia Serviciul Credincios 1878-1947*

The then Prince of Romania, Charles I, founded the Medal in two classes. It was awarded for Merit to both civilians and soldiers, including foreigners. Charles II added a third Class to the award on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 1932, also changing the outward appearance of the award and its ribbon. Swords were added for Merit during times of war on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February 1937 and a wartime ribbon on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 1938. With these two additions, the medal was also frequently awarded to German soldiers fighting alongside Romanians during World War Two. In addition to the changes he made, Charles II also determined maximum award counts: 3000 for the 1<sup>st</sup> Class and 6000 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Class. But as with most such limitations, these only applied to Romanian citizens during peace time.

### *Details*

The obverse of the medal is filled by the Royal Arms of Romania and the reverse holds the legend “Serviciul Credincios” (Faithful Service) surrounded by a laurel- and oak leaf wreath. There is a crown attached to the top frame of the medal with a ribbon attachment ring. Swords, if present, are fixed between the medal and the crown.

1 <sup>st</sup> Class	Carried on a small ribbon on the left side of the chest, gilt bronze.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	Carried as above, silvered.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Class	As above, bronze.

### *Measurements*

1878-1932	Diameter 30,5mm, height with crown 53mm.
1932-1947	Diameter 33mm, height with crown 59mm.

### *Ribbons*

1878-1932	35mm, watered, light blue with a yellow 3mm centre stripe.
1932-1947	Otherwise as above, but with 3mm silver edges.

### *War ribbon*

1938-1947	As above, but without the centre stripe and with 3mm gold edges.
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### *Faithful Service Cross – Crucea Serviciul Credincios 1906-1947*

Also founded by Prince Charles I in two classes and set above the previously founded medal to award meritorious foreigners and Romanians. Charles II later added a third class, swords and a wartime ribbon on the same date as for the medal. The Cross was frequently awarded to Germans

during World War Two. Charles II determined maximum award counts to be 2000 for the 1<sup>st</sup> Class, 5000 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Class and 8000 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Class.

Charles II also gave the cross award limits as with the medal: 1<sup>st</sup> class 2000, 2<sup>nd</sup> class 5000 and 3<sup>rd</sup> class 8000.

#### *Details*

##### *1<sup>st</sup> Type*

The centre of the cross holds the royal arms of Romania. Each arm has an oak leaf within it, pointing outwards. Rays of sun point away from the centre in between the arms of the cross. Above the cross we find a crown where ribbon is attached by means of a ring. The reverse side holds the legend “Serviciul Credincios” (Faithful Service) surrounded by a laurel- and oak leaf wreath.

##### *2<sup>nd</sup> Type*

The centre of the cross is now surrounded by an oak wreath between the centre and outward widening arms of the cross. The crown of the cross is now slightly smaller. The reverse side remains unchanged and swords, if present, run through the centre of the cross.

1 <sup>st</sup> Class	Carried on a small ribbon on the left side of the chest, gilded.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	Carried as above, silvered.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Class	As above, Bronze.

#### *Measurements*

1906-1932	Diameter 36-38 mm, height with crown 56-57 mm.
1932-1947	Diameter 36 mm, height with crown 57 mm.

#### *Ribbons*

1906-1932	35 mm, watered, light blue with a yellow 3 mm centre stripe.
1932-1947	Otherwise as above, but with 3-5 mm silver edges.
War ribbon	Same as with the Faithful Service Medal.

#### *Faithful Service Order– Ordinul Serviciul Credincios 1932-1947*

With the founding of the Order, Charles II created a new instrument for awarding higher distinction. At its largest the Order contained 5 classes:

Collar – Colan  
Grand Cross – Mare Cruce  
Grand Officer – Mare Ofițer  
Commander – Comandor  
Officer – Ofițer

#### *Changes within the Order:*

20.11.1935	The form of the Order and that of the classes of Grand Officer and Grand Cross was altered.
12.2.1937	The classes of Collar and Officer were added to the Order.
14.2.1937	Swords added to all classes of the Order for Merit during times of War.
19.12.1938	So called war ribbon added to all classes to be awarded with swords.

27.5.1939 The Classes of Grand Officer and Commander were disbanded.  
 31.5.1939 The class of Officer was disbanded.  
 30.6.1941 Swords were disbanded.

The number of Romanian Knights had the following limitations during peace time:

Class	- 22.2.1938	22.2.1938-
Collar	12	15
Grand Cross	25	35
Grand Officer	50	70
Commander	150	200
Officer	300	400

### *Signs of the Order*

The Sign of the Order is a Cross with turquoise enamelled arms and its centre is circled by a laurel wreath. The Obverse centre holds the Royal Arms of Romania and the reverse centre has the legend "Serviciu Credincios" (Faithful Service) surrounded by a laurel and oak-leaf wreath. The Cross is overshadowed by a royal crown, with an attachment ring for the ribbon.

### Collar (also known as the 1<sup>st</sup> Class)

Unfortunately, this class is so rare that the author failed to find even a written description (much less an image).

Grand Cross Worn in a large ribbon (sash) over the right shoulder. The body of the Cross and the Star is silver-gilt and the arms turquoise enamel. Cross diameter 59 mm and height with crown 84 mm.

Star 1st Type (1932-1935): 8-tipped, diameter 75 mm.

Star 2nd Type (1935-1947): 4-tipped, diameter 85 mm.

Grand off. Carried on the left side of the chest as in the Officer class. Star carried on the right side.

Star 1st Type (1932-1935): Cross-shaped, diameter 55 mm.

Star 2nd Type (1935-1947): 4-tipped, diameter 74-75 mm.

The Star is made of silver.

Commander Carried on a wide ribbon around the neck, silver-gilt and turquoise enamel.

(1932-1939) Diameter 48.5-50 mm.

Officer Cross silver-gilt and turquoise enamel, diameter 37-39.5 mm.

(1932-1939)

### *Ribbons*

Ribbon Watered with three equally wide stripes; light blue-white-light blue (Officer's ribbon has a rosette).

Class	Total Width	Stripes
Grand Cross	104 mm or 99 mm	34 / 36 / 34 mm
Grand Officer	37 mm	11.5 / 11.5 / 11.5 mm
Commander	47 mm	15 / 17 / 15 mm
Officer	34 mm	11 / 12 / 11 mm

War ribbon The war ribbon has golden edges, 7mm for the Grand Cross and 3mm wide for other classes, which means that the side stripes of the war ribbon are proportionally narrower.

Known manufacturers:

H. Weiss, Bucharest  
Joseph Resch and Son, Bucharest  
Zimmermann, Pforzheim  
Monetaria Nationala, Bucharest

#### *The Order today*

The Faithful Service Order was given a new life in the great Orders and Decorations reform of 2000, when it became the second highest peacetime Order in Romania, after the National Order of the Star of Romania. Its full name is the National Order of Faithful Service. Due to its high place in the Order Hierarchy, perquisites of its conferring are particularly meritorious acts that have served the interests of Romania both at home and abroad. In connection with military operations, it can be conferred to military units, in which case the cross of the Order is carried in the unit's flag. As with all other National Orders of the Republic, the Grand Master of the Order is the president of Romania.

The Classes in the present day Order are Grand Cross, Grand Officer, Commander, Officer and Knight. The sign of the Order has gone through some changes during its long hiatus, but the basic design has remained the same. The changes in Romania's National Arms have been in the centre shield, the enamel of the arms of the cross a deeper shade of blue and the Royal crown has been changed into an oval wreath of laurel and oak leaves. There are no significant changes in measurements or ribbons.

The conferring of the Order during peace time has the following limitations:

Class	Civil	Military
Grand Cross	120	30
Grand Off.	240	60
Commander	480	120
Officer	1200	300
Knight	2400	600

The maximum numbers of knights is set at 5550, but as with most such limitations, this does not apply to foreigners and awards made during wartime.

#### Conferring of the Order 2000-2007

Class	Romanian	Foreign	Total
Grand Cross	28	23	51
Grand Off.	51	26	77
Commander	96	93	189
Officer	217	58	275
Knight	899	14	913

The Order has been conferred 1505 times for civil merit since its rebirth in 2000 (until December 2007).

In addition, the Order has been conferred to four Romanian soldiers with swords and two Romanian military units have gained the Honour of carrying a Cross of the Order with swords in their flags:



The 60th Parachute battalion and the 11th Missile Regiment. The new form of the Order has been conferred to only one Finn: the Finnish Ambassador to Romania (1996-2000) Mikko Heikinheimo was conferred the Grand Officer's cross in the year 2000.

*The Faithful Service Cross and Medal today*

The cross and the medal have maintained their basic design well despite the long exodus, and the changes that have come to pass are in line with the changes within the Order. The National arms have changed and crown has been replaced by the oval oak and laurel-leaf wreath. The ribbon is still light blue, but now has white centre and side stripes. The only changes in the medal are the National Arms and the replacement of the Crown by the wreath.

Award limits for the Cross and the medal during peace time:

	Cross	Medal
	Civil / Military	Civil / Military
1 <sup>st</sup> Class	1000 / 200	1500 / 300
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	2000 / 400	3000 / 600
3 <sup>rd</sup> Class	4000 / 800	/ -

Maximum number of Cross holders are set at 8400 and 5400 respectively, with the two higher classes of medals. The number of 3<sup>rd</sup> Class medals is not limited.

Crosses and medals conferred 2000-2007:

	Cross			Medal		
	For.	/ Rom.	Total	For.	/ Rom.	Total
1st Class	4	/ 73	77	-	/ 80	80
2nd Class	1	/ 122	123	-	/ 184	184
3rd Class	4	/ 679	683	1	/ 1176	1177

The Cross has been awarded 883 times and the Medal 1441 times. In addition, 8 Romanian soldiers have been awarded with the Faithful Service Medal with swords.

The Manufacturer of the Order and its decorations is the National Mint, Monetaria Statului.

## 8. The Order of Charles I “Ordinul Carol I”

The highest Order in the Kingdom of Romania was founded to honour the 40-year reign of King Carol I (Charles) on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1906. It was so highly valued that the Order's Collar was added into the National Arms of Romania in 1921. The Order was designed by an Austrian scholar of Heraldry, Heyer von Rosenfeld. As this Order was named after the first King of Romania, I begin this article with some biographical details.

The future King of Romania was born on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 1839 in the Hohenzollern family castle by the Danube and was christened Karl Eitel Friedrich Zephyrinus Ludwig von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen. He was the second son of Prince Karl Anton of Hohenzollern and his wife princess Josephina of Baden. Karl Anton was a liberal ruler and Josephina a devout Christian.

Spending his childhood in the Hohenzollern family castle, Charles received a comprehensive basic education. At an early age, he was sent to begin his military career in the Prussian Army. He studied hard to pass the officers exam although, as a member of princely house, he would have been automatically accepted into the Officer Corps. After passing the exam with flying colours, Charles studied at the Artillery School in Berlin and received his first impressions of Politics when his father was Prime Minister of Prussia between 1858 and 1862. He then took part in the campaigns against Denmark in 1864 as a member of the Prussian Crown Prince's staff. He saw action during the assault on the fortress of Frederica, the attack on the isle of Duppel and the invasion of Jutland. After the war ended in a victory for Prussia and her allies, Charles stayed on in the army until he was offered the vacant throne of Romania in the spring of 1866.

The first ruler of an autonomic Romania, Alexander Ioan Cuza, had been forced to flee Romania on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 1866 and the country stood on the brink of an abyss. Romanians had already offered the vacant throne to the Duke of Flanders, a brother of king Leopold II of Belgium. Napoleon III, the French Emperor, who still had a great deal of influence in European politics, did not approve and the Romanians were forced to look for a candidate elsewhere. So the Romanians needed a candidate who could not offend anyone. Charles was related to Napoleon III on his mother's side and to Wilhelm I of Prussia by his father, and these relations made him the perfect candidate. He was elected as the new Prince (Domnitor) of Romania by the people of Romania in April 1866. After numerous telegrams and a complicated political game, Charles accepted. Since Prussia was at war with Austria at the time, he had to travel through Austria incognito. When Charles arrived in Romania, he was first greeted by the Prime Minister Ion Brătianu and in Bucharest (10.5.1866) by a large crowd eager to see their new ruler.

Soon after he had reached his new country, the Parliament of Romania passed a new progressive constitution (29.6.1866). This helped the young country to develop into an independent state; the new constitution did not even mention Romania being a part of the Ottoman Empire. On a personal note, Charles married Elisabeth, Princess of Wied, in 1869. As the Russo-Turkish War began in 1877, Romania declared herself independent on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1877 and declared war on Turkey. The small Romanian army joined the Russians to fight a common enemy, but not until Charles had confirmed the status of Romania as a co-belligerent ally, not as a vassal of Russia. Charles led Romanian troops himself and later commanded the combined Russo-Romanian forces in battles

across Bulgaria, including the siege of Plevna. The war finally ended in an Ottoman defeat, and the Berlin peace conference of 1878 recognised the independence of Romania. The war had given Romania its independence, and Charles' reputation as a leader of men had ensured his popularity among the people. He was already a king in practice, but the matter was sealed by an amendment to the constitution (15.3.1881). He was crowned as the first King of Romania as Charles I on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1881.

During his 48-year reign, Romania quickly developed into a European nation. The nation's economy grew steadily, the populace became better educated and the country gained more esteem in Europe. Charles also built the most famous Romanian castle at Peleş. In private life his marriage with Elisabeth was not a happy one and the death of their only child, Princess Maria, as a consequence of Scarlet Fever at only 4 years of age, alienated them further. Even though the couple was eventually able to live in harmony, the House and the country still needed a male heir to the throne. This problem was solved when the king's brother's oldest son, Prince Ferdinand took on the mantle of Crown Prince in 1889.

Charles was the King and ruler of Romania in the true sense of the word, but he never forgot his German roots. He secretly joined the tripartite defence-pact between Germany, Austro-Hungary and Italy in 1882, although the sympathies of the people lay more with France. This pact was no longer valid when the 1<sup>st</sup> World War broke out in 1914, but Charles still felt that Romania should stand by Germany. Charles called an emergency meeting of his cabinet where he disclosed the existence of the secret pact and his view of applying it to the current situation. The majority of the cabinet disagreed with him and he died suddenly only two months later on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 1914.

Charles I ruled Romania longer than anyone before or since him, and he had a major influence on the birth and rapid growth of Romania as a European nation. He had a strong character and was a workaholic. And despite his healthy Hohenzollern pride, he got better along with a hard working peasant than a lazy nobleman. These character traits and his political acumen, combined with leadership skills honed in the Prussian army made him an excellent King.

### *The Order during the Kingdom era*

The Order was first founded in four classes: Collar, Grand Cross, Grand Officer and Commander. Of these, the classes of Grand Officer and Commander were disbanded in 1932 by the order of Charles II. The Grand Master of the Order was the King of Romania and Foreign Minister was its Chancellor. Due to the very high status of the Order, it was only awarded to the most high ranking and distinguished individuals in Romania.

The perquisites for the Collar were naturally the highest. The Collar was only conferred to military personnel who had commanded a mobilised army during times of war and to statesmen with at least 20 years of meritorious service and a year as Prime Minister. Other possible awardees were individuals with exceptional scientific or artistic achievement, but only if their work had benefited not only Romania, but the whole of mankind.

Romanian awardees had to have been previously awarded the highest classes of other Romanian Orders. Foreign receivers were almost exclusively heads of state. Princes of the Royal House received the Collar on their 18th birthday.

Limits of conferring the Order to Romanians were as follows:

Collar	5 (22.2.1938 onwards 10)
Grand Cross	10 (22.2.1938 onwards 20)
Grand Officer	25 (1906-1932)
Commander	40 (1906-1932)

The number of foreign knights was not limited.

In exceptional cases the Order could be conferred post mortem and as of the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 1944, the Order could be conferred to women. It is also known that a version with diamonds was conferred to Sultan Abdul Hamid II in 1907. The only known Finn to be conferred with the Order is President Risto Ryti, who received the Collar with the Grand Cross (as a head of state) in 1942. The following Romanians are known to have received the Collar:

Alexandru Averescu (Field Marshal, commander of the 2nd Army during WW1, three-time Prime Minister of Romania 1918-27)

C. Prezan (Field Marshal, commander of the 4th Army and Chief of Staff to the entire Romanian Army during WW1)

I. C. Brătianu (five-time Prime Minister of Romania 1909-27)

P.P.Carp (Prime Minister of Romania twice 1900-1912)

N. Iorga (Prime Minister 1931-32)

N. Titulescu (Foreign Minister, Chairman of the League of Nations in 1930 and 1931)

### *Signs of the Order*

The sign of the Order consists of a red-brown enamelled cross bottony with gilded rays extending outwards from its centre. There is Crown above the cross with a red-brown enamelled backing with the ribbon attachment ring. A crowned eagle spreading its wings is affixed on the obverse, which holds an Orthodox Cross in its beak and a sword and a sceptre in its claws. A silver ribbon goes through these old symbols of power with the blue enamelled legend "Prin statornicie la isbinda" (Through loyalty to victory). The Eagle's breast has a gilded centre with the portrait of King Charles surrounded by a laurel leaf. The reverse centre holds the king's monogram surrounded by a blue ribbon with two small laurel leafs and the legend "1866 \* 10. MAIU \* 1906" (the beginning date of the King Charles I reign and of its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary). The gilded rays are more pronounced on the reverse. The Cross of the Order is similar with all classes, with the exception of the changes in its scale.

The Star of the Grand Cross and Grand Officer has the same eagle as the crosses, but it is fixed on a gilded star. The Star is 8-tipped for the Grand Cross and 4-tipped for the Grand Officer. Collar of the Order consists of a normal cross of the Order, which is affixed to a long gilded chain. The chain consists of 22 enamelled medallions that depict of the Arms of the four provinces of Romania (Muntenia, Moldavia, Oltenia and Dobrugea), the Arms of the Royal House of Hohenzollern (in the middle) and the monogram of King Charles I. The series of Arms is repeated on both sides of the collar with the monogram after each crest. The attachment mechanism is on the reverse of the familiar eagle.

- Grand Cross Worn on a large ribbon (sash) over the right shoulder, with the Star on the left side of the chest. Cross silver-gilt and red-brown enamel, star silver-gilt and blue enamel (in the motto of the Order)  
Width of the cross 77 mm and height with crown 104 mm. Diameter of the Star 84-85 mm, wingspan of the Eagle 89 mm.
- Grand Off. Carried on a broad ribbon around the neck, with the star on the left side of the chest. Diameter of the cross 65 mm, height with crown 89 mm. Width of the star 86 mm and height 87 mm.
- Commander Carried on a wide ribbon around the neck. Same as the Grand Officers cross.
- Ribbons Watered light blue with small golden edges with a red centre stripe.
- Grand Cross 101 mm, golden edges 5 mm, red centre stripe 0.75 mm.
- Commander/ Grand Off. 50 mm with 3.5 mm golden edges and a 0.5 mm red centre stripe.
- Women Same as the Commander, but shaped as a bow.

The Order was manufactured by Paul Telge in Berlin and H. Weiss in Bucharest.

### *The Order today*

King Michael I took control of the Order on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2005 as a dynastic Order of the Royal House. The Grand Master is the head of the Royal House of Hohenzollern, currently King Michael. The Order is conferred by the Grand Master exclusively to persons that have helped the Royal family as it struggles to build a democratic, prosperous, and free Romania as a full member in the European and Transatlantic family of Nations. In other words, the Order can be conferred to foreign and Romanian citizens for Merit in fields ranging from science, arts and culture to economics and politics as long as the person in question has improved the standing of Romania. This general criterion naturally becomes stricter as higher grades of the Order are conferred.

The Sign of the Order has remained unchanged, but the class of Knight has been added to it and the classes of Grand Officer and Commander, disbanded in 1932, have been reinstated. Thus, the current classes are: Collar (Colan), Grand Cross (Mare Cruce), Grand Officer (Mare Ofițer), Commander (Comandor) and Knight (Cavaler).

Conferring of the Order has been limited as follows:

Class, Yearly maximum	Max. number of Knights
Collar, 2 conferred	5
Grand Cross, 3 conferred	15
Grand Officer, 4 conferred	25
Commander, 6 conferred	35
Knight, 12 conferred	70

The total number of Knights has been capped at 150. The number includes foreign and Romanian citizens. The Order has not been conferred since its rebirth and the only living knight is the Grand Master of the Order, King Michael I.

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